

**Succeeding at Organizational Transformation: A
Study of Literature, Western Military
Organizational Transformations in the Last
Seventy Years, and Comments on the Current
Canadian Forces Transformation**

**A Monograph
by
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Abstract

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Organizational transformations are inherently difficult to achieve in any public or private sector. As such, there has been a significant body of writing developed primarily in business and the military as to how to achieve successful organizational transformations. The intent of this paper is to synthesize these writings down to five key principles that will then be used to examine several recent, western, military transformations. They include the attempt at U.S. unification in the 1940s, the implementation of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, the creation of the Australian Defence Force in the 1970s and Canadian Forces unification in the 1960s. Once these historical examples have been used to test the five principles of a successful organizational transformation, the current attempt at a transformation of the Canadian Forces will be examined to determine if that endeavor is likely to succeed or not.

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Introduction

“Transformation is moving an organization to a higher plane, leading it to become something qualitatively different while retaining its essence.”¹

Military force is one of the most important and potent tools available to a government to protect or pursue the nation’s interests. History is replete with examples of either the government losing control of the military or neglecting it such that the military is in no shape to meet an emerging threat. The difficulty is with the development of close civil-military relations such that both sides of the equation are concerned about the same threats and understand those threats with the same amount of clarity. Unfortunately, the threats to national interests change over time and military organizations are not very adept at fundamental change without significant external impetus.² The reality of the situation is that from time to time, a nation’s military must do more than just shift some priorities or make similar minor changes to meet the new threats. When that time comes, a transformation is required but again, the inertia of military bureaucracy guards very effectively against transformation; significantly better than they guard against mere change. Ideally, these transformations should not be on the heels of a catastrophic defeat and should be motivated from within the government or military itself. However, achieving a successful organizational transformation without a clear and present danger means overcoming that glacial inertia that large organizations, such as the military, possess.

Retired Canadian Lieutenant-General Michael K. Jeffery has identified strategic vision and leadership as necessary elements for an effective transformation of the command structure of a nation’s military.³ Current organizational change theory and recent historical examples have

¹ Gordon R. Sullivan and Michael V. Harper, *Hope is not a Method: What Business Leaders Can Learn from America’s Army* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), 148.

² Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 202.

³ Michael K. Jeffery, *Inside Canadian Forces Transformation: Institutional Leadership as a Catalyst for Change* (Kingston, Ontario: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009), xi.

also shown that a successful transformation is dependent on establishing a sense of urgency, using internal and external change agents, creating irreversible traction and remaining cognizant of the organizational culture and coherence.⁴ Only by using all of these tools, will transformations such as the current Canadian Forces Transformation overcome lingering inertia and become permanent.

To demonstrate the logic behind this thesis, it will be necessary to examine current business and military organizational change theory to show the origin of the five principles listed above. With those established, it will be necessary to confirm that they are both germane to a military organization and to western nations in recent history. Four recent historical examples will facilitate this task: the attempted unification of the U.S. military in the 1940s, the following successful transformation caused by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, the creation of the Australian Defence Force in the 1970s, and finally, the unification of the Canadian Forces in the 1960s. Once the five principles demonstrate their utility as metrics to measure the success of an organizational transformation, specifically a western military transformation, then it will be possible to use those five principles to examine the current efforts in Canada to operationalize the Canadian Forces. While it will never be possible to use the principles in a predictive fashion, they will provide sufficient insight as to what to do better to achieve success or what not to do to retard that process. Before leaping to the utility of the five principles, their origin must be demonstrated as being legitimate.

Principles for a Successful Organizational Transformation

How does one change a large organization? That question has plagued leaders both within the military and in business. Given the element of human will and decision-making within both types of organizations, it should be possible to examine the theories from both domains to

⁴ See the next section for a development of these principles from existing literature.

find a template or guide on how to achieve this difficult task. The main difference across the business-military divide is the fundamental motivations of the two types of organizations. Once one removes the business focus of expanding the bottom line and the military focus of winning the nation's wars, the models of the internal workings of those large hierarchical structures are quite similar. Therefore, this portion of the paper will examine the theories and writings from both the military and business to determine those key considerations when attempting to overcome organizational inertia and transform a rigid structure.

Any cursory search of the term 'transformation' leads to a very diffuse and wide-ranging collection of literature. To inform the development of useful principles to follow in order to achieve a successful transformation a reduction of that collection is necessary to better focus on the actions that the leadership of an organization must take to motivate and accomplish transformation. This therefore, removes from the study many of the works that have examined the perpetual battle in which militaries engage to best equip and train themselves to meet the challenge of the next war. Within the narrower focus of motivating organizations to change, two names constantly surface; John P. Kotter and Edgar H. Schein. It will be necessary to examine the core of their theories before checking to ensure other writers have no other key considerations to include as the key principles to achieve a successful organizational transformation.

John P. Kotter, a professor at the Harvard Business School, has been writing about leadership and change for over thirty years.⁵ One of his most notable beliefs is that leaders press for change while managers promote stability.⁶ Based on his experience and observations he has developed eight steps to transforming an organization. The first step is to establish a sense of urgency by examining market and competitive realities, identifying and discussing crises,

⁵ Faculty, "John P. Kotter," Harvard Business School, <http://drfd.hbs.edu/fit/public/facultyInfo.do?facInfo=bio&facEmId=jkotter> (accessed December 6, 2010).

⁶ John P. Kotter, "What Leaders Really Do," *Harvard Business Review* Best of HBR (December 2001): 3.

potential crises or major opportunities. Second, form a powerful guiding coalition with enough power to lead the change effort and encourage that group to work together as a cohesive team. Third, create a vision to help direct the change effort and develop strategies to achieve that vision. Fourth, communicate the vision using every vehicle possible while teaching by example new behaviours in line with that vision. Also included is Kotter's fifth step of empowering others to act on the vision by getting rid of obstacles to change, changing structures or systems that undermine the vision and by encouraging risk taking and non-traditional ideas, activities and actions. Sixth, plan for and create short-term wins that are visible, recognized and rewarded. Seventh, consolidate improvements and produce still more change that builds upon the short-term wins and attacks those systems, structures and policies that do not fit with the vision, and eighth, institutionalize new approaches by articulating the connections between the new behaviours and organizational success as well as developing the means to ensure continued leadership development and succession.⁷

The only other author cited as often is Edgar H. Schein, professor emeritus at the Sloan Management School, but his writings focus on understanding the culture of the organization in order to plan a transformation.⁸ Schein proposes that understanding the cultural inertia, which exists in any organization, is critical to any successful transformation. He also suggests that only by ensuring that change stays in line with those foundational cultural beliefs will success be allowed.⁹ Therefore, adding the caveat of organizational cultural sensitivity to Kotter's list of

⁷ John P. Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," *Harvard Business Review* (March-April 1995): 61.

⁸ Edgar H. Schein, "How Founders and Leaders Embed and Transmit Culture: Socialization from a Leadership Perspective," in *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992): 3.

⁹ Edgar H. Schein, "How Founders and Leaders Embed and Transmit Culture: Socialization from a Leadership Perspective," in *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992): 337.

eight steps would be prudent. Other authors have found useful considerations for transforming organizations.

Another Harvard Business School professor specializing in organizational change, Michael Beer and a former member of the Harvard Business School, Russell A. Eisenstat, conducted research into how to develop an organization capable of implementing new strategies and learning. They based their work on three principles.¹⁰ First, the change process should be systemic or be applied across the entire organization and not just to one portion of the organization. This principle is within Kotter's list of eight as he reinforced the need to reduce those portions of the organization that are not assisting the transformation as well as communicating the transformational vision across all available media to the entire organization. The need for the process to be systemic also matches well with Schein's advice to consider the culture of the organization when implementing any transformation. Further, Kotter stresses that as positive results of the early steps of the transformation become apparent, they are used to continue to rid the organization of obstacles to change regardless of where they may reside in the existing organizational system. Second, Beer and Eisenstat advocate that the transformation should encourage the open discussion of barriers to effective strategy. Again, Kotter covers this concept as he identifies the need to communicate the vision and empower others to act on that vision. Finally, Beer and Eisenstat recommend that the change process should develop a partnership among all relevant stakeholders. While Kotter's eight steps may not fully address this issue, by adding Schein's admonition to keep all the different elements of the organizational culture in mind when attempting a transformation, the marriage of both Kotter and Schein's ideas fully cover the principles of Beer and Eisenstat. This further reinforces the need to keep not only Kotter and Schein's principles in the list but also to further examine other perspectives to ensure a

¹⁰ Michael Beer and Russell A. Eisenstat, "Developing an Organization Capable of Implementing Strategy and Learning," *Human Relations* 49, no. 5 (May 1996): 598.

complete list. One other viewpoint is a chapter, written by Naval Postgraduate School professor Nancy C. Roberts, in a recent book on Military Transformations.¹¹

Nancy Roberts sees transformation as based solely on changing the culture of the organization.¹² Her list of six steps mirror Kotter's eight but with a focus on adapting the culture of the organization.¹³ While it is important to consider culture when using Kotter's eight steps, Roberts' overwhelming focus on adapting that culture makes her list of steps less universally applicable when compared to Kotter's. This is due to her focus on the use of the existing structure, processes, organization, and people as a means to change the culture instead of focusing on the end state of developing a new organizational structure. With respect to the needs of a nation's military, the latter is far more important than a change to the culture of the military. Therefore, Kotter's eight steps with Schein's concern for the organizational culture are more applicable to the organizational transformation of a nation's military. However, Roberts' research strengthens the importance of the cultural aspect of the principles. Another set of authors, Stephen Gerras and Charles Allen, professors at the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, do a better job of maintaining Kotter's focus on the organization while still considering the organizational culture.

¹¹ Chapter 11 of this book, written by Nancy C. Roberts, explores transforming organization culture from a systems perspective. While her chapter is relevant to this study, the other chapters of the book focus on transformations in the nature of warfare, not the institution. See Bernard F. W. Loo, ed., *Military Transformation and Strategy: Revolutions in Military Affairs and Small States* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

¹² Ibid., 179.

¹³ Roberts' Six Steps include describing the existing organizational system in terms of its strengths and weaknesses, setting a new strategic direction and establishing what results you want to achieve, stating your ideals and values, locating points of intervention in the organization, designing interventions, and monitoring your performance over time. See ibid., 187.

Gerras and Allen's focus is not as specific as is Roberts' with respect to adapting the culture.¹⁴ As a result, they advocate the use of embedding and reinforcing mechanisms to achieve organizational transformation. Gerras and Allen define embedding mechanisms as those that align with what the leader is doing, while reinforcing mechanisms are those that change the structure of the organization. Interestingly, the subordinate parts of these two mechanisms cover the same ground that Kotter has with his eight steps but with a focus on the strategic leader and his/her influence in the process. Kotter only assumes the involvement of the leader while Gerras and Allen ensure the leader is critical to the entire process. Therefore, the list of important principles to consider in order to achieve a successful organizational transformation includes Kotter's eight steps, Schien's consideration of culture and now Gerras and Allen's specific inclusion of the strategic leader. Another point of view to consider comes from a proponent on the use of design in business practices.

When president and chief executive officer of the design firm IDEO, Tim Brown and industrial design professor, Barry Katz, wrote their book advocating the use of artistic design in business, they focused a chapter on how best to teach an organization to use this new process.¹⁵ Within that chapter, they covered many of the same ideas discussed above on how to transform an organization. Specifically, they advocate workshops to expose people to the new ideas, pilot projects to help market the ideas, leadership focusing on the program of change, interdisciplinary teams to broaden the effort for change, dedicated spaces in the workplace to ensure permanence,

¹⁴ Stephen Gerras and Charles Allen, "Strategic Leadership and Organizational Change," in *Strategic Leadership: The General's Art*, ed. Mark Grandstaff and Georgia Jones Sorenson (Vienna, VA: Management Concepts, 2009), 185.

¹⁵ The book *Change by Design* by Brown and Katz is written for business readers and walks the reader through an outline as to what design thinking is in the first six chapters, and then focuses on how to implement design thinking in the last four chapters. Of the four chapters on how to implement design or a significantly different method of analyzing problems, only Chapter Seven: Design Thinking Meets the Corporation speaks specifically to the issue of how to transform an organization. See Tim Brown and Barry Katz, *Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation* (New York: Harper Business, 2009).

measurement of impacts of the change to help with resource allocation, and incentives to foster belief in the transformation. These excellent practical techniques would work to both implement design in a business and implement change in any organization. However, Kotter's eight steps subsume these ideas and his steps are more applicable as principles while Brown and Katz's guidance is more applicable for the practical execution of the transformation. The second last literary source to examine is the recent work written by retired Canadian Lieutenant-General Michael K. Jeffery, former commander of Canada's Army.

Jeffery examined the initial efforts taken by the Canadian Forces to achieve transformation in his book entitled, *Inside Canadian Forces Transformation*.¹⁶ In this book, he cites both Schien and Kotter. Further, during his examination of the nature of change, Jeffery stresses the protection of organizational coherence during the transformational process.¹⁷ He defines this coherence as that inner strength that an organization has that allows it to continue to function, be motivated towards its mission and be a choice organization within which to work. Without organizational coherence, that organization crumbles from within and is unable to accomplish a fraction of its potential. He also stresses the importance of the organizational culture, Kotter's eight steps and the need for strong leadership throughout the process. Given Jeffery's analysis, it is appropriate to add the maintenance of organizational coherence to Kotter's eight steps, Schein's consideration of the organization's culture and Gerras and Allen's support by a strategic leader.

One last source of literature for organizational transformations is Canadian Forces doctrine. Since the principles will be used to examine both historic and current Canadian Forces examples of organizational transformation, it would be a significant omission not to examine this

¹⁶ Micheal K. Jeffery, *Inside Canadian Forces Transformation: Institutional Leadership as a Catalyst for Change* (Kingston, Ontario: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009).

¹⁷ Ibid., 16.

doctrine. A recent rewrite of leadership doctrine within the Canadian Forces has resulted in very detailed publications on the many aspects of leadership including leading change. In Chapter Five of the Canadian Forces (CF) manual on *Leading the Institution*, ten steps are recommended to achieve change.¹⁸ As Kotter is one of the recommended readings at the end of that chapter, it is not surprising that many of the principles already identified are directly compatible with CF doctrine. The doctrine includes, creating a compelling vision, creating a plan to achieve that vision, communicating the vision, and linking that vision to mission success. These four concepts are very close to Kotter's third and fourth step of creating and communicating a vision. Similarly, the CF doctrine suggests developing a change team, implementing change, maintaining momentum and sustaining change. Kotter's powerful guiding coalition and his last two steps, which cover the concept of ensuring no loss of traction, cover these principles. The last two concepts contained in CF doctrine are conducting stakeholder and impact analysis as well as understanding the complexity of change. The first of these two ideas is within Kotter's concept of empowering members of the organization to get rid of obstacles or structures that will resist the transformation. The second idea: that of understanding the complexity of change, deals with the culture of the organization as well as the inertia of the organization. These two ideas track well with Schien's concept of respecting the culture of the organization and Kotter's step involving a sense of urgency. As a result, the dictates of CF doctrine with respect to affecting change or organizational transformation are in line with the principles already identified from other literature. This fact further reinforces the utility and completeness of the principles developed so far.

This review of business, design and military literature as it applies to motivating transformation in a large organization has rendered eleven principles for a successful

¹⁸ Canadian Forces Doctrine, *Leading the Institution* (Kingston, Ontario: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007), 101.

organizational transformation. These start with Kotter's seminal work on transforming an organization and his eight steps as the basis of those principles and adding Schien's consideration for the organizational culture, Gerras and Allen's inclusion of the strategic leader and Jeffery's respect for the organization's coherence. Using all eleven principles when examining historical examples of military transformations will be ungainly and, as such, it is necessary to reduce those eleven down to a more manageable number. While Kotter's first step, *establishing a sense of urgency*, stands alone, his third and fourth deal with creating and communicating the vision. These two are only effective when used in concert; a created vision without communicating it across the organization is not useful nor is a lack of any vision. When combined they read *creating and communicating the vision*. Similarly, the second of Kotter's steps involves forming a powerful guiding coalition and step five focuses on empowering others to act. Both of these can be collected under the heading of: *internal and external change agents*. The last three steps in Kotter's list focus on gaining momentum, lodgment and permanence for the transformation, which combined is *irreversible traction*. Similarly, it will be possible to group Schein's consideration for the organizational culture with Jeffery's concern for the organizational coherence into one principle called: *organizational culture and coherence*. As with Kotter's first step, Gerras and Allen's strategic leader is fundamental to the process but that leader impacts the transformation through vision and the communicating of that vision, therefore it is necessary to combine *creating and communicating the vision* with that strategic leadership to form, *strategic leadership and vision*. The following table demonstrates this consolidation:

Original Steps and Principles	New Principles
<u>Author: Kotter</u>	
Establishing a Sense of Urgency	Establishing a sense of urgency
Creating a Vision	Creating and communicating the vision
Communicating the Vision	
Forming a Powerful Guiding Coalition	Internal and external change agents
Empowering Others to Act on the Vision	
Planning for and Creating Short-Term Wins	
Consolidating Improvements and Producing Still More change	Irreversible traction
Institutionalizing New Approaches	
<u>Author: Schien</u>	
Organizational Culture	
<u>Author: Jeffery</u>	Organizational culture and coherence
Organizational Coherence	
<u>Author: Gerras and Allen</u>	
Strategic Leadership	Strategic leadership and vision.

Table 1: Principles of a Successful Organizational Transformation

This list of five principles, derived as they have been from business, military and design thinking, will allow for a critical examination of several historical examples of military organizational transformation. Once the principles are tested against these historical examples, it will be possible to apply them to the current Canadian Forces transformation to determine if that initiative can be successful.

Attempted Transformation: Unification of U.S. Military in the 1940s

The writings of military theorist Carl von Clausewitz include a commentary about using historical examples. In essence, it is impossible to use history to predict the future but history can be used to explain an idea, to demonstrate the application of an idea, to support a statement, or with exhaustive study, deduce a doctrine.¹⁹ This portion of the paper will attempt to test the five principles of a successful organizational transformation against several historical transformations. To keep the examples as applicable as possible it is necessary to limit the examples to similar cultures, recent history and transformations of the nation's military. As such, four examples will test the five principles. The four examples will be the attempted unification of the U.S. military after the Second World War, the work following this effort represented by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, unification of the Australian Defence Force in the 1970s, and the unification of the Canadian Forces in the 1960s. These examples of the unification and reorganization of western militaries in the past seventy years will best test the principles of a successful transformation for use in a current example, specifically, the efforts ongoing in Canada to operationalize the Canadian Forces. For the purpose of this study, a successful transformation is one that achieves the stated goals for that organizational transformation. Many articles and books chronicle the debates with respect to the changes to the operational effectiveness or the enhancement of civil control of the military after the transformations listed above. Those debates are not germane to this study. More important to this study of successful organizational transformation is whether the transformation met the goals defined before that significant change. The first transformation of note includes the efforts in the late 1940s as the post-war U.S. military applied lessons learned in the difficult battles of the Second World War.

¹⁹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 171-2.

The end of the Second World War resulted in a sizable contraction of the U.S. military. As this contraction occurred, there was an expectation of being able to reduce significantly the funding for the military. Throughout the war, there was a necessary and high level of duplication of capabilities between the Army and Navy. This duplication was not an efficient use of resources that could survive in a post-war economy.²⁰ The evolution and spread of air forces to the pre-existing Departments of War and Navy, as well as the vital importance this new dimension of warfare represented, meant that during the difficult fighting of the Second World War, both departments had developed separate air forces.²¹ Further, within the Navy, the development of the Marines as a capable, self-contained land force led the Army to advocate the removal of the Marines from the Navy's order of battle.²² The final, major, issue of contention was who would control the new atomic weapons.²³ The differences in the army-focused experiences in Europe as opposed to the navy-focused experiences in the Pacific theatre did nothing to add clarity to which capabilities should continue to reside in each service. Compounding this issue was the fact that the Army Air Force, as it existed during the Second World War, needed to develop into its own service. This new player in the inter-service rivalry added to the debate as to how to allocate capabilities, missions, tasks, equipment, and resources to each service.

President Harry Truman and the existing Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) could not get any coherent advice from the two polar opposites represented by the Department of War and the Department of the Navy.²⁴ As a result, it appeared that some sort of unified military or at least a

²⁰ Steven A. Wolfe, "Leaving Key West: The Struggle to Rationalize Roles and Missions," in *The American Military in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 4.

²¹ Anna Kasten Nelson, "President Truman and the Evolution of the National Security Council," *Journal of American History* 72, No. 2 (September 1985): 361.

²² Dale R. Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 58.

²³ Wolfe, "Leaving Key West," 7.

²⁴ Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency*, 55.

unified, joint, command and control of the separate services was necessary to break through the service rivalries that seemed not to allow any meshing of capabilities across the services.

President Truman sided with the Army and wanted a single Secretary with the powers to dictate unified direction to the services.²⁵ The leading service that disagreed with a unified concept was the Navy. They believed that they had the most to lose from the unification of the armed forces and proposed three separate services retain most of their prerogatives with the JCS performing the coordinating function. Due to the Navy's belief that they were not going to be successful in their proposal, they took the fight to Congress and the media to ensure that the resulting National Security Act of 1947 was not a very effective unification of the three services. That act did not solve any of the cross-services competitions for scarce funding and capabilities.²⁶ It was only the arrival of the Korean conflict that opened the funding streams to such a point that each service could continue to possess the capabilities they had developed in the Second World War.²⁷

This attempt to unify the U.S. military was a failure when examined against the aims of President Truman immediately after the Second World War.²⁸ As such, it should be possible to use the five key principles of organizational transformation developed in the previous section to identify why this failure occurred. This examination will better develop the five principles to ensure that they are useful for other historical examples as well as current and future issues. First, it will be necessary to examine the *strategic leadership and vision* displayed during this attempted transformation.

²⁵ Amy B. Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 123.

²⁶ Ibid., 128.

²⁷ Wolfe, "Leaving Key West," 14.

²⁸ Demetrios Caraley, *The Politics of Military Unification: A study of conflict and the policy process* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 55.

Based on the Second World War, President Truman had a vision for the unification of the U.S. Military.²⁹ It was to repair the personality-dependent nature of President Roosevelt's civil-military relations and replace it with an organizational structure that would give the President timely, appropriate military advice as well as make the necessary decisions to streamline the structure of the military.³⁰ The National Security Act of 1947 did not meet these two goals. While the act formalized the pre-existing JCS, it did nothing to stop the inter-service competition for resources.³¹ The Korean War and the resulting increase in the defense budget obscured President Truman's lack of perseverance to pursue his goals for the National Security Act. The President did not provide the necessary, continuous pressure required to enact such a transformation in an organization the size of the U.S. military. Truman modified his goals based on the pressure brought to bear by Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, through the media and various senior Naval Officers and Department of the Navy officials pleading their case to Congress. As demonstrated by Gerras and Allen in the previous section, without a strategic leader maintaining a clear, consistent vision of the transformation, it will not happen. President Truman was not able to provide the *strategic leadership and vision* necessary to meet his goals due to the political pressures brought against the fulfillment of the transformation. It is now necessary to examine the second principle of a successful transformation, that of establishing a *sense of urgency*.

Once hostilities had ended in the Pacific theatre of operations, President Truman proposed unification to Congress in December 1945.³² The compromise in the form of the National Security Act did not become law until 1947. While this does represent a significant period, there was a *sense of urgency* throughout the deliberations. The urgency came from the

²⁹ Caraley, *The Politics of Military Unification*, 55.

³⁰ Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency*, 54 and Zegart, *Flawed by Design*, 117.

³¹ Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency*, 62.

³² Caraley, *The Politics of Military Unification*, 55.

President and pro-unification leaders as well as those opposed to unification. The growing need to reduce defence spending quickly and to streamline the interface between the President and the military services drove the urgency on the pro-unification side while the perceived need to defend the air wing of the Navy, as well as the Marines, drove the urgency on the anti-unification side of the debate. Regardless of the motivation, with both sides pushing to meet their objective, it is clear that there was a *sense of urgency* albeit towards crossed purposes. The next and third principle of a successful transformation is that of *internal and external change agents*.

Successful transformation of an organization requires change agents supporting the transformation and the removal of any agents that are working to stop the transformation. In the case of U.S. unification in the 1940s, the actions of the Navy, as they took their case to Congress and to the media, were clearly contrary to this principle. Further, without President Truman's constant and persistent support for unification, the pro-unification leaders were not able to suppress or counter the actions of the Navy. The result was the partial unification represented by the National Security Act of 1947. The lack of an effective communications strategy as an agent of change was also evident in this case. In fact, much of the opposition from the Navy was due to the lack of a clear statement of what the long-term goals were for the unification. Given this lack of clarity, the Navy feared a significant loss of capability and therefore felt it had to fight against the entire plan. Regardless, without harnessing the positive agents of change and suppressing the negative agents of change, a transformation will not be successful. The next and fourth principle to be tested is that of *irreversible traction*.

The passing of a law is one of the most lasting and concrete actions that can be taken in the context of the U.S. military to change its organization, roles, or size. In the case of this early effort towards unification, the passing of the National Security Act in 1947 represents *irreversible traction*. Unfortunately, as previously stated, this act only represented a partial achievement of the original goals of unification. Therefore, the larger issue of not reaching the actual endstate detracted from any *irreversible traction* that the passing of the National Security Act may have

demonstrated. The final principle in question is that of recognizing the *organizational culture and coherence*.

The Second World War taught many lessons for the two services and the fledgling air forces. Given the lives that were lost to learn these lessons, they almost instantaneously formed the culture for those organizations. The efforts by President Truman did not clearly recognize or appease those new cultural sensitivities and therefore met with significant resistance. Specifically, the Navy's new queen of battle was the air wing on an aircraft carrier; also, the performance of the Marines in the Pacific Theatre was already becoming a thing of legend.³³ The initial understanding of unification put both of these institutions at risk. These icons of U.S. strength were intractable from the American public's perspective and the Navy commanders correctly realized that they had to fight to keep both. Similarly, as the Air Force was formally recognized, it tried to collect as many roles as possible to ensure it was a peer competitor with the Army and the Navy. To collect those missions it had to take from either the Navy or the Army. The Army seemed to understand that this was the price of moving forward but the Navy would not let any task go. These attacks on the organizational culture and coherence of the Navy resulted in their not supporting the transformation, which resulted in the unification being anything but complete.

President Truman wanted to unify the armed forces of the United States after the Second World War. He saw as his vision a structure that was subordinate to the JCS such that the military forces could be streamlined and the civilian-military interface would be more effective. The National Security Act of 1947 only achieved the latter half of this goal. Given the lack of *strategic leadership* to achieve the entire goal, the persistence of the Navy as agents against this change, the lack of a clear and consistently communicated vision and the counter-cultural nature of the transformation, this should not be surprising. Even the fact that there was a strong *sense of*

³³ Wolfe, "Leaving Key West," 2.

urgency and the *irreversible traction* of an act of Congress did not overcome these forces of momentum to allow for a successful transformation.

From the perspective of the five principles of a successful transformation, the attempted unification in the 1940s has shown that they are useful principles to dissect a military transformation. Had President Truman pressed Congress and the services to unify using a clearer and consistently communicated vision, he likely would have been successful. However, he would have had to co-opt the Navy into his vision to ensure his success. This example from history has shown that the current list of principles is useful in this case but it will be necessary to apply them to the next attempt to achieve President Truman's goals to confirm their utility.

Successful Transformation: The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986

The U.S. military provides yet another excellent example of a significant organizational transformation in the 1980s. In the thirty years since the passing of the National Security Act, the cooperation between the different services had not improved.³⁴ There was still a need to achieve President Truman's original goals for a clearer method of providing military advice to the administration and empowering the JCS to be capable of dealing with the competing services. Successive presidents and administrations did not have the time or inclination to attack the problem. Presidents used alternative solutions such as appointing a military advisor to the White House or using the civilians within the Department of Defense to provide advice on budgets, military plans and other issues normally the purview of the JCS.³⁵ In 1986, the passing of the Department of Defense Reorganization Act, also known as the Goldwater-Nichols Act, finally addressed President Truman's goals. Democrat Representative Les Aspin described this act as, "probably the greatest sea change in the history of the American military since the Continental

³⁴ James R. Locher III, *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 1.

³⁵ Zegart, *Flawed by Design*, 138-140.

Congress created the Continental Army in 1775.”³⁶ Therefore, it is an ideal subject of study using the five principles of a successful organizational transformation. To do so, it will be necessary first to provide some of the key details of this significant transformation of the U.S. military.

Two critical issues inspired the Goldwater-Nichols Act. First, was the lackluster performance of the U.S. military since the Second World War and second, was the very public misuse of tax dollars by that same institution.³⁷ At the root of these problems was the power of the services to protect themselves and the lack of incentives to work jointly. This resulted in a military that was rife with service parochialism to the point that the JCS were not able to function and the Commanders-in-Chiefs (CINCs) of the unified commands, who were responsible for planning and conducting all U.S. military operations, were not able to achieve their missions.³⁸ Therefore, the intent of the Goldwater-Nichols Act was to empower both the Chairman of the JCS as well as the CINCs while reducing the influence of the services.³⁹ The development of this intent started when the Chairman of the JCS, General David C. Jones, testified on February 3, 1982 in front of the House Armed Services Committee.⁴⁰ He was supported shortly thereafter by the Army Chief of Staff, General Edward C. Meyer.⁴¹ As General Jones retired, the anti-reform perspective, led by the Secretary of Defence, Caspar Weinberger, four of the five new Chiefs of Staff, and most of the Navy began to thwart any reforms.⁴² Then, two catalytic events occurred that caused members of both the Senate and House Armed Services Committees to get behind

³⁶ Sam Nunn, forward to *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986*, by Gordon N. Lederman (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), ix.

³⁷ Zegart, *Flawed by Design*, 142-143.

³⁸ Peter J. Roman and David W. Tarr, “The Joint Chiefs of Staff: From Service Parochialism to Jointness,” *Political Science Quarterly* 113, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 95.

³⁹ Wolfe, “Leaving Key West,” 27-29.

⁴⁰ Locher III, *Victory on the Potomac*, 33.

⁴¹ Gordon N. Lederman, *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), 54.

⁴² Zegart, *Flawed by Design*, 142.

these reforms. The first was the death of 241 U.S. Marines in Beirut and the second was the invasion of Grenada which although a success, highlighted several inter-service issues that detracted from the effectiveness of the U.S. military.⁴³ These events resulted in bi-partisan leadership for the idea of reform within Congress led by Senators Barry Goldwater (Republican-Arizona) and Sam Nunn (Democrat-Georgia) as well as Representatives Bill Nichols (Republican-Alabama) and Les Aspin (Democrat-Wisconsin).⁴⁴ With this leadership in Congress, it was possible to navigate through the more than four years, twenty-two hearings and hundreds of rounds of testimony that was required to pass the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.⁴⁵ The passage of this law was truly transformational for the U.S. military. To evaluate how these leaders in both houses of Congress were able to deliver the goals of strengthening the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the CINCs, it will be necessary to use the five principles of a successful organizational transformation.

The first and most important of the five principles is that of *strategic leadership and vision*. In the case of the Department of Defense Reorganization Act, Senator Goldwater and Representative Nichols provided the leadership through their excellent reputations and their willingness to work with their deputies in their respective Armed Services Committees.⁴⁶ Further, the very machinations of Congress allowed for the development of the vision for the proposed act to be transparent and open for debate. This public and inclusive vision ensured that everyone was

⁴³ The lack of a coherent threat picture in Lebanon caused the death of those Marines at the Embassy. Reviews after the incident showed that the understanding of the threat was resident within a different service within DoD. The opinion of Roman and Tarr is that this dramatic loss of life caused the two Armed Services committees to examine more closely the activities of DoD. Similarly, the invasion of Grenada was conducted as two separate operations because of a lack of understanding and interoperability between the Marines and the Army. See Roman and Tarr, "The Joint Chiefs of Staff," 98.

⁴⁴ Zegart, *Flawed by Design*, 142; Sam Nunn, forward to *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon* by James R. Locher III (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), xi.

⁴⁵ Zegart, *Flawed by Design*, 146.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 146.

aware of what the goals were for the legislation. With these two able leaders pushing for the reforms and their ability to communicate their vision, it is clear that they followed the first principle of organizational transformation. However, was there a *sense of urgency* in the deliberations?

Over four years lapsed between General Jones' testimony to the House Armed Services Committee and the passing of the Department of Defense Reorganization Act. While this is a significant period, there was a sense of urgency through most of the proceedings. Spurred on by the catastrophe of losing 241 U.S. Marines in Beirut and the less than stellar performance during the invasion of Grenada in 1983, the deliberations in Congress had the impetus of ensuring the armed forces were able to execute more challenging missions in a successful manner. Further, with the leaders of both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees championing the bill, it stayed on the agenda, which meant it had to be discussed, and with the behind-the-scenes pressure brought throughout Congress by the reformers it was eventually passed into law.⁴⁷ The urgency may not be evident by the time it took to pass the Goldwater-Nichols Act into law but given that it passed and was not left off the Armed Services Committees' agendas there was clearly a *sense of urgency*. It may not have succeeded if the principle of *internal and external change agents* was not followed.

The Pentagon was not supportive of the Goldwater-Nichols act. For this transformation to be successful, it was necessary for the proponents to overcome this obstacle. Senator Goldwater and Representative Nichols managed to overcome these anti-reform sentiments by convincing Congress that there was a larger need for the reorganizational act and when the President did not exercise his veto, the bill became law.⁴⁸ For both of these actions to be successful, the leaders of the reform movement relied upon their bi-partisan approach to the bill as well as the vast amount

⁴⁷ Locher III, *Victory on the Potomac*, 420 and 425.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 433.

of credibility that they had in Congress, with respect to being pro-military.⁴⁹ The bi-partisan nature of the proponents for the bill in both the House and Senate meant that other members of the legislature could vote for the bill without letting down their party.⁵⁰ Similarly, the military credibility of the leaders of the reforms meant that they were able to portray most opposition as symptoms of the problem that the bill was intended to fix – service parochialism. The opposition by Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, would have led to difficulties translating the bill into law if the President had sided with his Secretary of Defense. As it was, President Reagan chose not to be involved in the debates over defense reorganization and therefore left the decision-making to Congress.⁵¹ With the efforts and credibility of the leaders of the reform in Congress being what they were, the bill passed into law by a vote of 95-0 in the Senate and 406-4 in the House.⁵² Clearly, Senator Goldwater and Representative Nichols were able to marshal supportive *agents of change* while silencing the oppositional *agents of change*. Fortunately, given the nature of laws passed by Congress, their successful advocacy of the passage of the Department of Defense Reorganization Act into law meant that they also achieved the fourth principle of a successful transformation, *irreversible traction*. Once a law exists to enact the transformation it is not only difficult to fight against that change, it is illegal. The difficulties that surround changing an existing law are such that once passed a law provides very effective *irreversible traction*. Therefore, there is only one other principle that must be studied and that is to remain aware of the *organizational culture and coherence* when pursuing any transformation.

The *organizational culture and coherence* of the military is always against reorganization as was the case in the 1980s U.S. military. The built-in protectionist attitude and structure of the

⁴⁹ Lederman, *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 74.

⁵⁰ Nunn in forward to Locher III, *Victory on the Potomac*, xi.

⁵¹ Zegart, *Flawed by Design*, 146.

⁵² Locher III, *Victory on the Potomac*, 420 and 425.

services resulted in most of the opposition for the Goldwater-Nichols reforms. However, between the initial catalyst of change coming from a sitting Chairman of the JCS and the choices by the reformers to only strengthen existing structures, most of the counter-cultural issues were not very strong.⁵³ The effect of the reforms was to strengthen the Chairman of the JCS and the CINCs. Both of these positions already existed and were already empowered to do most of what was required but the act only further strengthened their authorities. While the result was a comparative weakening of the services, that was seen as a necessary action not a counter-cultural one.⁵⁴ Therefore, given that the reforms contained in the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 were not significantly eroding the culture of the military, just reinforcing elements thereof, it did not clash significantly with the U.S. military's *organizational culture and coherence*.

There have been many debates in the twenty-four years since the Department of Defense Reorganization Act passed into law as to whether or not it needs to be changed or removed from the statutes.⁵⁵ Notably, it has been neither significantly amended nor revoked. That very fact is a testimony to its success. That success is because in pushing this bill through Congress, the pro-reform group provided *strategic leadership and vision, a sense of urgency*, marginalized the oppositional *agents of change* while supporting the pro-reform *agents of change*, secured

⁵³ The services argued most strongly against the reforms as they saw their influence and control waning. The perception was that only a member of each of the respective services was capable of understanding that service. The concept of joint advice and joint planning was, in the minds of the services, therefore impossible. Beyond this rationale, the true reason for opposition by the services was lack of trust that a joint decision making body, either the JCS or a unified combatant command, would not be able to champion service issues as strongly as the existing heads of the services. For more information see also Herspring, *The Pentagon*, 57; Frank Hoffman, "Goldwater-Nichols After a Decade," in *The Emerging Strategic Environment: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by Williamson Murray (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1999), 182.

⁵⁴ Locher III, *Victory on the Potomac*, 429.

⁵⁵ The debate has been wide ranging. For some examples: see Wolfe, "Leaving Key West," 30-49; Lederman, *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 85-110; Douglas Stuart, "Ministry of Fear: The 1947 National Security Act in Historical and Institutional Context," in *International Studies Perspectives*, 4 (2003), 298-299; or Hoffman, "Goldwater-Nichols After a Decade." Of note, opponents seem to have been more plentiful in the late 1990s due to several perceived U.S. military setbacks while supporters have been more plentiful immediately after Operation DESERT STORM and in the post September 11, 2001 timeframes.

irreversible traction and minimized the impact on the *organizational culture and coherence* of the U.S. military. Therefore, the Goldwater-Nichols reforms demonstrate the utility of examining a large military organizational transformation through the lens of the five principles of a successful organizational transformation developed earlier in this paper. Before it is possible to apply these principles to a current transformation, it would be prudent to examine some non-U.S. examples of military transformations, first, the creation of the Australian Defense Force from three separate services in the 1970s.

Successful Transformation: The Creation of the Australian Defence Force in the 1970s

Similar to the journey followed by the U.S. military after the Second World War, the Australian military flirted with unification after that conflict in order to facilitate uniquely Australian joint operations. Adoption of this concept did not happen due to fears of upsetting the existing balance of power between the services and the associated civilian bureaucracy as well as the lack of domestic political will to pursue such a potentially damaging course of action.⁵⁶ While the desire to unify the five different departments that represented the Defence Group of Departments persisted, it did not occur until the passage of the Defence Reorganisation Act of 1975.⁵⁷ The successful events instigated by then Secretary of the Defence Department, Sir Arthur Tange, in the 1970s represents an organizational transformation that would be useful to study using the five principles of a successful organizational transformation developed above. To do so, it will be necessary to set out the details of this successful transformation.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ After the Second World War, the Australian people were tired of war and did not want to have informed discussions about military reform. Successive governments avoided upsetting the status quo and despite studies to the contrary, no defence reform occurred. See David Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 42.

⁵⁷ Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 249.

⁵⁸ Proper names will protect the Australian or Canadian spelling of such words as Defence or the Australian spelling of words such as Reorganisation. Otherwise, common American spelling will be used.

Despite the suggestion to unify the Australian military after the Second World War, there was very little action in this regard by successive governments. This was partially due to a lack of attention towards the structure of the military by politicians but it is also partially due to the lack of a need for fully unified joint forces in Australia. After the Second World War, Australia mainly contributed specific forces; Army, Navy or Air Force to alliances as separate services.⁵⁹ The involvement of five different Departments of State in the defence of Australia led to growing impetus to streamline those departments in order to allow for better cooperation between the services as well as to better link procurement and spending by the services to the defense needs of the nation.⁶⁰ To achieve this reorganization, it was first necessary to subjugate the three services: Army, Navy and Air Force, as well as the Department of Supply, under the existing Defence Department. Each of these separate departments had their own minister, secretary, advisory boards, and for the three services, senior military chiefs of staff. At times, these departments reported through the Minister for Defence but at other times directly to Parliament. The secretary position in each of these organizations represented the senior civil servant for that department. Three factors lined up in order to allow this transformation to occur. First, the leadership and personality of the Secretary of the Defence Department, Sir Arthur Tange, was such that he could envision what had to be done, what could be done, and how to do it. Second, in December 1972, a Labor Party government replaced the long-time ruling party in Parliament thus bringing in a new set of ministers with new perspectives. Third, the war in Vietnam had just ended for the Australian forces and they had just ended National Service, which presented a relative lull in the operational tempo of the military.

⁵⁹ Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, 42.

⁶⁰ Sir Arthur Tange, *Defence Policy-Making: A Close-Up View, 1950-1980* (Canberra: Australian National University E Press, 2008), 53.

With these factors in line, it was possible for Sir Arthur Tange to develop a plan that met with the intent of the new Minister for Defence, Lance Barnard. The government received the details of this plan in the form of the Tange Report in November 1973.⁶¹ The most notable goal of the transformation was to create a single Defence Department while keeping the services intact. Also included were the goals to have better cooperation between the services, better oversight and command of operations, as well as more transparency between Parliament and the services with respect to spending and procurement.⁶² To achieve these goals, two important subordinates of the elected Minister for Defence were established, both within the Defence Department. They would be the Chief of Defence Force Staff, who would command the military side of the organization, while the Secretary of the Defence Department would administer the department. These two senior officials were to lead the Australian Defence Force depending on the issue at hand. If it were to be an administrative, budgetary, or policy issue, then the Secretary would be in charge; if it had to do with the command of military elements on operations, then the Chief of the Defence Force Staff would be in charge. This complicated relationship, called the ‘diarchy’, depended on the personalities involved and the wisdom of the Minister for Defence when choosing the civil servant or military officer to fill these positions.⁶³ Most of the criticism for the transformation came from the perceived increase in the power of the civilian side of the Defence Department led by the Secretary. Regardless, the formation of the Australian Defence Force under a single Defence Department and led by this ‘diarchy’ was a successful organizational transformation as it met the original goals of one department, separate services, better operational oversight, better transparency for Parliament and better cooperation between the services. The success that the

⁶¹ Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, 46.

⁶² Tange, *Defence Policy-Making*, 53.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 60.

Australian Defence Force had in East Timor is a testimony to the success of this transformation.⁶⁴

It is now necessary to examine if the five principles of a successful transformation apply to this historical example beginning with the principle of *strategic leadership and vision*.

Sir Arthur Tange provided the necessary *strategic leadership and vision* to see the defence reorganization through to becoming law. His knowledge of the defence departments, government politics and his strength of character were well known. This was due to his decades of service as a federal civil servant with both the Department of External Affairs and the Department of Defence.⁶⁵ With a new Labor government and a supportive Minister for Defence as well as an operational lull for the military, it was the perfect time for Tange to implement his vision for a more coherent and effective military for Australia. Sir Arthur Tange based his vision for a reorganized Australian Defence Force upon both his own experience and previous government studies of the subject.⁶⁶ The reorganization plan benefitted from significant consultation with the existing defence departments and the service chiefs.⁶⁷ The only manner in which Tange failed to follow the principle of *strategic leadership and vision* was with respect to communicating that vision across the defence force. In his memoirs, Tange confesses that he expected the service chiefs to communicate the details of the reorganization but as he heard of more and more misinformation coming from the officers in the military, he realized that he needed to spread his vision in a more direct fashion. He did this by sending out teams of informed officers to spread his vision of a unified defence force to all the naval, army and air bases within

⁶⁴ Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, 1.

⁶⁵ Sir Arthur Tange served from World War Two to 1969 with the Department of External Affairs and then from 1970 until retirement in 1979 with the Department of Defence. See Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, 248.

⁶⁶ F.A. Mediansky, “Defence Reorganisation: 1957-1975” in *Australia in World Affairs: 1971-1975*, edited by W.J. Hudson (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), 49.

⁶⁷ Tange, *Defence Policy-Making*, 57.

the Defence Force.⁶⁸ Since the principle of *strategic leadership and vision* was followed in this case, it is necessary to examine the next principle of a successful organizational transformation, that of a *sense of urgency*.

Discussed in the 1940s, proposed in the 1950s, unification of the defence group of departments and formation of the Australian Defence Force did not display any semblance of urgency before 1972. The election of the new Labor government provided the right political environment for the reorganization of the Defence Departments and Sir Arthur Tange very quickly produced a detailed plan for implementing a consolidation into one single department while preserving the integrity of the three armed services. Within days of the election of the Labor government, the new Minister for Defence, Lance Barnard, publicly announced this plan by issuing a statement of intent for the reorganization of the Defence Group of Departments. Sir Arthur Tange produced his Tange Report on that reorganization and presented it to the Government by November 1973. The Defence Force Reorganisation Act passed into law in 1975 and the Australian Defence Force came into existence on 9 February 1976.⁶⁹ For such a monumental reorganization, the passage of just over three years is not a significant amount of time; therefore, this transformation satisfies the principle of *sense of urgency*. It is now necessary to examine the use of the principle of *internal and external change agents*.

With a positive political environment provided by the election of the Labor Government and Sir Arthur Tange's efforts to include the service secretaries and chiefs in consultations before he formulated his reorganization plan, there were few opponents to change remaining. The most significant opposition came from middle ranking military officers. Blame for this opposition resides with the lack of understanding by those officers of the inner workings of the civil service.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 63.

⁶⁹ Tange, *Defence Policy-Making*, 53; Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, 248; Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, 47.

The service chiefs did not support this opposition.⁷⁰ Tange helped to disarm this opposition by involving the service chiefs in his deliberations and by sending out teams to spread information about the details of the reorganization.⁷¹ Further, he appointed a former Secretary to the Department of the Army, Bruce White, to chair the committee responsible for the development of the reorganization plan and push it through to a successful completion. With the use of information teams sent around the Defence Force, an active committee chaired by a credible public servant, consultations with the service departments and chiefs, and support from the government, Sir Arthur Tange satisfied the principle of *internal and external change agents*. Therefore, it is now necessary to examine the principle of *irreversible traction*.

As discussed in the previous two sections, the best manner to ensure that any transformation has *irreversible traction* is to have it codified into law. In the case of the creation of the Australian Defence Force, this is the case. The recommendations provided in the Tange Report to the Government became the basis for the 1975 Defence Force Reorganisation Act. Further testimony to the irreversible nature of these reforms was the fact that after a change in government in late 1975, the new Liberal-Country Party did not attempt to repeal or change the Act.⁷² With a clear case in support of the principle of *irreversible traction*, it is now time to examine the last of the five principles of a successful organizational transformation that of respecting the *organizational culture and coherence*.

Sir Arthur Tange was a career bureaucrat and civil servant. While his reputation in those circles was well established, he did not have any experience within the Defence Force itself.⁷³ As such, his reforms could very well have been counter-cultural for the Australian military.

⁷⁰ Mediansky, “Defence Reorganization,” 64.

⁷¹ Mediansky, “Defence Reorganization,” 52; Tange, *Defence Policy-Making*, 63.

⁷² Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, 249.

⁷³ Tange, *Defence Policy-Making*, vii.

However, through his use of consultations with the service secretaries and chiefs, he ensured that this was not the case. In fact, the implemented transformations ensured that the services retained their identities and a clear chain of command through the service chief to the newly created position of Chief of the Defence Force Staff. The decision to protect the services and by focusing the reforms to the government departments, the unique service cultures and coherence were not affected. Even as opposition to the reforms came from the middle ranking officers in the Defence Force, it did not last long or amount to any significant challenge.

The adherence to the five principles of a successful organizational transformation during the creation of the Australian Defence Force in the 1970s clearly demonstrate how the principles, when followed, lead to success. In this historical case, following the principle of *strategic leadership and vision, sense of urgency, internal and external change agents, irreversible traction*, as well as paying attention to the *organizational culture and coherence* led to a very successful amalgamation of five different defense departments and a significant transformation that has persisted to this day.

The five principles have withstood the test of three transformations in two different nations. It is now necessary to examine the unification of the Canadian Armed Forces in the 1960s.

Successful Transformation: The Unification of the Canadian Armed Forces in the 1960s

All of the organizational transformations examined so far have had the characteristic of being both successful and unsuccessful depending on when they are so classified and whether success is strictly limited to the original goals of the transformation or to the effect on the effectiveness of the military in question. The debate still exists over the success of the Goldwater-Nichols Act; similarly, U.S. unification in the 1940s was not successful at that time but given the

addition of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, it may be possible to say that there has been some unification of the U.S. military.⁷⁴ In Australia, while the reorganization in the 1970s obviously was successful in creating the Australian Defence Force, there is still debate as to whether or not that reorganization is currently meeting the needs of Australian defense.⁷⁵ The same polarity of opinion exists with respect to the Canadian efforts in the 1960s. As far as the goal to unify the three services into the Canadian Armed Forces, it was a success, but there is still debate as to whether or not the unification met the larger aims of that reorganizational effort.⁷⁶ The next section will examine some of this persistent debate on the current Canadian Forces Transformation, but before it is possible to focus on the current initiative, it will be necessary to explore the background and events that occurred in the 1960s to create the Canadian Forces (CF). Once those facts are established, it will be possible to apply the five principles of a successful organizational transformation to explore how the unification was successful in the context of the 1960s.

Three factors combined to induce the unification of the CF in the 1960s. First, there was the need to reduce spending on defense in order to fund other government initiatives; second, the Cuban Missile Crisis shocked the government as to how little oversight it had of the military; and last, Canada had a new and very ambitious Minister of National Defence who felt the need to leave his mark.⁷⁷ To address these issues, as a new Liberal government won election in 1963, the new Minister of Defence, Paul Hellyer, began his crusade to unify the CF. While his vision was

⁷⁴ Wolfe, “Leaving Key West,” 31 and 33.

⁷⁵ Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, 59.

⁷⁶ The Canadian National Defence Act defines the military forces in Canada as the Canadian Armed Forces however, the common name for those forces has been shortened to the Canadian Forces or CF. Both will be used throughout this paper. See also Geoffrey D.T. Shaw, “The Canadian Armed Forces and Unification,” *Defense Analysis* 17, no. 2 (2001): 168.

⁷⁷ Shaw, “The Canadian Armed Forces,” 159; Douglas L. Bland, *Chiefs of Defence: Government and the Unified Command of the Canadian Armed Forces*, (Toronto: Brown Book Company, 1995), 67; Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada: From Champlain to Kosovo*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1999), 249.

to address these issues and although relatively schooled in the workings of the Defence portfolio from his time as opposition defence critic, he found that the complexity of the organization was greater than expected. As a result, the path to unification was not direct and often a result of managing the intended and unintended consequences of earlier decisions.⁷⁸ Initial efforts began with the publication of a Government White Paper on Defence in 1964, which mainly outlined the future expenditures, and *raison d'être* of Canada's military but the text of the White Paper assumed that the CF would adopt a unified structure. The next step was to create the Chief of Defence Staff position and create the Canadian Forces Headquarters made up of representation from all three services of the military. The final step from Hellyer's point of view was the passing in Parliament of the Canadian Forces Reorganization Act in 1967.⁷⁹ In this short time, Hellyer abolished the three services and created a single uniform for all Canadian Forces personnel as well as only one system of ranks and insignia. These reforms were designed to stamp out service-centric decision-making and refocus the military along functional lines such that the debate over operations and procurement occurred within the military, not in the Minister's office.⁸⁰ Given the perceived attack on the history and traditions of the services, many of the senior officers did not welcome these reforms. In fact, due to Paul Hellyer's actions, two generals, seven admirals and eventually the first Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshall Frank Miller, tendered their resignations.⁸¹ Given the successful passing of legislation and the creation of a unified Canadian Armed Forces, which exists to this day, and the turmoil clearly present in the military as demonstrated by the senior resignations, how does this organizational transformation compare to the five principles of a successful transformation?

⁷⁸ Bland, *Chiefs of Defence*, 71.

⁷⁹ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 253.

⁸⁰ Bland, *Chiefs of Defence*, 68.

⁸¹ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 251.

The first principle of a successful organizational transformation is that of *strategic leadership and vision*. Paul Hellyer clearly provided strategic leadership as he implemented the various changes that led to the unification of the CF in 1968. His relentless pressure to put together the necessary legislation and his lobbying of his fellow Members of Parliament to ensure it became law is a testimony to that fact.⁸² However, his vision may not have been as clear. Certainly, as a new Minister of Defence in 1964, Hellyer recognized that there was a need for change, but the details of that change were not well articulated or communicated.⁸³ This lack of a clear vision may have given rise to more resistance to the plan than was necessary, as it did not allow for effective feedback while the plan was being developed and implemented. The strength of character of Paul Hellyer certainly addressed the need for a strategic leader but in the case of the unification of the CF, he relied too heavily upon that strength to the detriment of formulating a clear, detailed vision for this transformation. It is now necessary to examine the *sense of urgency* involved in this historic example.

Paul Hellyer was an ambitious politician who saw the unification of the CF as his springboard towards leading his political party in the next federal election.⁸⁴ This was due to the expectation was that the current leader of the Liberal Party would retire in time for the next election in 1967 or 1968.⁸⁵ Therefore, Paul Hellyer had a finite time to achieve his aims. This impetus coupled with the accolades he was receiving from both the Prime Minister and positive

⁸² Ibid., 253.

⁸³ Hellyer initially appointed a Chief of Defence Staff but without clear responsibilities or duties. Once this appointment was made, the impacts of this decision became clear and they eventually resulted in the decision to form a headquarters (CFHQ) to support the Chief. When this still did not produce the results that Hellyer intended he began to pursue full unification of the Canadian Forces. See Bland, *Chiefs of Defence*, 71.

⁸⁴ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 250.

⁸⁵ D. W. Middlemiss and J. J. Sokolsky, *Canadian Defence: Decisions and Determinants*, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989), 64; Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 253.

interest from other governments fuelled Hellyer's drive to complete the reorganization.⁸⁶ As a whole, Hellyer's personal and relentless drive within the Department of National Defence and Parliament provided the *sense of urgency* throughout the process. With this principle accounted for, it is now necessary to examine the utilization of *internal and external change agents*.

The drive orchestrated by the Minister of Defence within the department and in Parliament represents a significant positive change agent. The support that Paul Hellyer's initiatives were getting from the media and the Prime Minister also represents significant positive external change agents.⁸⁷ Similarly, the resignations of senior officers and the change of Chief of Defence Staff from the unsupportive Miller to the supportive General Jean Victor Allard shows that Hellyer was removing internal agents that were not helping the transformation.⁸⁸ To emphasize that point, Minister Hellyer, "made it clear that those who opposed his ideas would either be fired or asked to take early retirement."⁸⁹ By removing those officers against unification and by finding supportive officers for unification, as well as harnessing those external change agents that were supportive of the transformation, it is clear that this historical example followed the principle of *internal and external change agents*. The same is true for *irreversible traction* as the unification of the CF was tabled and accepted through the 1964 White Paper and involved legislation passed into law in both 1964 and 1967.⁹⁰ Therefore, the only principle left is that of respecting the *organizational culture and coherence*.

⁸⁶ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 252.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 251.

⁸⁸ Air Chief Marshall Frank Miller could not see the utility of the changes that Minister Hellyer was driving to implement. Conversely, General Jean Victor Allard, as a younger and less traditional officer, saw the opportunities inherent in unification. Specifically, as a French-Canadian, the removal of many of the British legacies that were part of Hellyer's transformation meant a far more Canadian and less British CF. This resonated with the French-Canadian senior officers. See Bland, *Chiefs of Defence*, 85.

⁸⁹ Middlemiss, *Canadian Defence: Decisions*, 67.

⁹⁰ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 251-253.

Although the unification of the CF in 1968 is a success in the narrow sense of being a significant change in structure that has persevered until the present day, it was questionable as to its value towards making the CF more efficient or effective.⁹¹ Further, it was a significant emotive issue with service personnel at the time and continues to be so for some to this day.⁹² The root of the emotional issues was the heavy-handed method by which Paul Hellyer enacted the unification. As he had identified the three services as the root of the problems he wished to fix, he decided to eradicate all differences between the services.⁹³ The three services represented the organizational culture and coherence of the Canadian military before unification. Therefore, Paul Hellyer's efforts to abolish the differences between the services through the implementation of a common uniform, rank structure, as well as integrating the support trades were a direct attack on the culture of the organization and contrary to that principle of a successful transformation.⁹⁴

The unification of the CF met most of the five principles of a successful organizational transformation and the fact that it has been an enduring structure demonstrates that success. However, the manner with which the Minister of Defence implemented the unification antagonized the members of the military and questions as to whether or not that reorganization met the original goals stated by Paul Hellyer persist. With respect to the five principles, it can only be speculated that if there was a clearer vision, and had the existing organizational culture not been destroyed during the transformation, these lingering criticisms may not exist. Regardless, from the perspective of validating the five principles of a successful organizational

⁹¹ Unification and then integration of the CF initially broke down the morale and cohesion of each of the services then it transferred power to the integrated military-civilian National Defence Headquarters. As a result, the civilians in the department held more power and more focus was placed on bureaucratic and administrative efficiency instead of ensuring that the CF Forces were equipped and resourced to meet their mission and tasks. See Shaw, “The Canadian Armed Forces,” 168.

⁹² Ibid., 171; Daniel Gosselin and Craig Stone, “From Minister Hellyer to General Hillier: Understanding the Fundamental Differences between the Unification of the Canadian Forces and its Present Transformation,” *Canadian Military Journal* 6, no. 4 (Winter 2005-2006): 6.

⁹³ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 250-252.

⁹⁴ Shaw, “The Canadian Armed Forces,” 160.

transformation, this historical example has added weight to the utility of the five principles. Similarly, together with the three previous examples, spanning three different western countries and fifty years of recent history, these examples have demonstrated the comprehensive lens that the five principles bring to an examination of an organizational transformation. As such, it is now possible to bring those principles to bear on the current efforts in the CF as it tries to undo some of the civilianization that occurred shortly after unification and tries to operationalize its structure.

Successful Transformation? The Current Canadian Forces Transformation

The decades since unification have been somewhat of a roller coaster ride for the CF. Shortly, after Paul Hellyer left the position of Minister of Defence, the government passed legislation to make National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) into a ‘diarchy’ similar in nature to that of Australia. The legislation put the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) on par with a civil servant, the Deputy Minister of Defence, and they both reported directly to the Minister. This change caused the organization to “place administrative acumen above military insight.”⁹⁵ One of the intentions of both the integration of NDHQ, and unification before it, was to make the military more responsive to Parliament. This did not happen; instead, the civilian defence bureaucracy came to possess more control of the military.⁹⁶ This was partially due to the need for direct Parliament-military control not being very important to the military or Parliament. During the Cold War and for the two decades after the Berlin wall fell, the vast majority of Canadian military deployments were within a NATO defense of Europe context or on United Nations peacekeeping missions. Those military commitments did not require a mission-oriented structure such that the government could control deployed forces through an appropriate headquarters.⁹⁷ In the case of

⁹⁵ David Bercuson, *Significant Incident: Canada’s Army, the Airborne, and the murder in Somalia* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1996), 72.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 74.

⁹⁷ Bland, *Chiefs of Defence*, 265.

the NATO missions, the North Atlantic Council, with senior Canadian representation, pre-approved and screened the employment of Canadians and in the case of peacekeeping; those missions were not very dangerous or challenging until the 1990s. Therefore, a civilian-controlled NDHQ and military did not adversely affect operations while ensuring that the civil service tightly controlled funding and procurement in a similar manner to the other federal governmental departments. In the 1990s, when CF operations became more dangerous and difficult, the reality of a civilianized upper echelon with a lack of focus on deployed operations created the current initiative to transform the CF.

Any examination of a current initiative is difficult given the ever-changing nature of large organizational transformations. Not only has the initiative not necessarily come to any plateau of stability, the scholarly debate over the relative success or failure of the initiative is ongoing and not necessarily based on all the facts. Only after a transformation has ended, and the knowledge of the details of that transformation become more transparent, is it possible to write academic works on the subject. Further, only after the development and publishing of several different academic points of view will there be a more robust understanding of the initiative in all its detail. As CF Transformation is a current initiative, it is impossible to determine if it has run its course, if more change is on the horizon, or if a reversal of the efforts to date is in the near future. As such, it is only possible to study this transformation to date by comparing the efforts taken by the CF over the past five years and compare them to the five principles of a successful transformation.

The current round of CF Transformation began shortly after the commencement of General Rick Hillier's term as CDS in February 2005. The transformation was a condition of Hillier's when he accepted the position of CDS. He desired to refocus the CF on deployed and domestic operations, and swing the pendulum of power in NDHQ away from the civilians and

towards effectiveness instead of efficiency.⁹⁸ In March 2005, General Hillier formed CDS action teams and engaged the General/Flag Officers from across the CF. He published his vision of transformation and established the CF Transformation Team later in that same year. Throughout the process, he attached his name and position to the transformation as well as pushed for tangible results in a short time. The immediate goal attached to transformation was the establishment of a more robust staff for the CDS to be called the Strategic Joint Staff, as well as the establishment of four operationally focused headquarters in Ottawa to be known as Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command, Canada Command, Canadian Operational Support Command and Canadian Special Operations Forces Command. These organizations officially came into being in February 2006.⁹⁹

As the impact of these changes and the path of transformation became clear, opposition grew within the senior ranks of the CF. One of the impacts of the establishment of these new headquarters was the move of talented officers into these headquarters and away from other organizations, most significantly the army, navy and air force staffs.¹⁰⁰ The power of the Environmental Chiefs of Staff had grown since the destruction of the services under unification in 1968.¹⁰¹ Therefore, any undermining of their power was going to cause problems for the success of the transformation. In particular, the Air Force and Navy were concerned that they would become mere supporting elements given the current overwhelming army focus of the CF, and the

⁹⁸ Rick Hillier, *A Soldier First: Bullets, Bureaucrats and the Politics of War* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2009), 323.

⁹⁹ Jeffery, *Inside Canadian Forces*, 27.

¹⁰⁰ Canada, Standing Senate Committee for National Security and Defence, *Four Generals and an Admiral: The View from the Top*, 39th Parliament, 2nd sess., 2008, 13.

¹⁰¹ With unification in the 1960s the use of the word ‘Service’ and any references to the separate Army, Navy or Air Force disappeared from the CF. Initially, they were replaced by functional commands that were mostly joint and focused on providing military power in a specific region or for a specific mission. As the CF relaxed the ban on all things associated with the former services, the use of the word ‘environment’ appeared to fill the need to refer to the Army, Navy and Air Force. In essence, the land, sea and air environments, after 20 years of hiatus, replaced the Army, Navy and Air Force of pre-unification. Therefore, the service chiefs of staff are now referred to as the Environmental Chiefs of Staff or ECS. See Bland, *Chiefs of Defence*, 91-124.

new operational level headquarters on the land-centric conflict in Afghanistan.¹⁰² Since General Hillier's retirement in July 2008, there has been very little evidence of further transformation. The CF Transformation Team is now a permanent part of NDHQ and the former Chief of the Land Staff is now the CF Chief of Transformation.¹⁰³ When asked about the status of transformation during Senate hearings in the summer of 2010, the current Chief of Defence Staff, General Walt Natynczyk stated that the new headquarters were working very well and had paid dividends managing simultaneous operations in Haiti, Afghanistan and domestically supporting the winter Olympic Games in Vancouver. The former commander of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command told the Senate in 2008 that he did not expect that any further transformation or changes to the existing structure would occur until after 2010 due to the projected operational tempo of the CF.¹⁰⁴ While not possible to evaluate whether or not CF Transformation has run its course, the evaluation of the organizational transformation to date is possible using the five principles of a successful transformation.

General Rick Hillier demonstrated the principle of *strategic leadership and vision* through the publication of a vision in September 2005 and his ceaseless, personal reinforcing of that vision whenever he engaged with members of the CF.¹⁰⁵ He was also responsible for the *sense of urgency* with respect to CF Transformation. By establishing action teams in his first year

¹⁰² Jeffrey, *Inside Canadian Forces*, 100. Note that in 1969 the Army, Navy and Air Force were disbanded and were massaged into functional commands: Mobile Command, Air Command and Maritime Command. By the 1980s these commands had reverted to being essentially Army, Air Force and Navy HQ. At that time they were closed and moved from their dispersed locations to NDHQ to become what is now known as the Environmental (the environment being air, land or sea) Staff.

¹⁰³ Canada, Senate, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee for National Security and Defence*, 40th Parliament, 3rd sess., 2010, issue no. 5, 8th and 9th meetings, 6.

¹⁰⁴ 2010 represented a peak effort for the Canadian Forces due to the domestic requirements to support the Winter Olympic Games followed by the G-8 summit in Toronto as well as a spike in Kandahar, Afghanistan of both land forces and rotary wing air forces. This peak was not expected to subside due to the need to recover forces after these efforts, until sometime in 2011. See Senate, *Four Generals and an Admiral*, 14-15.

¹⁰⁵ Gosselin and Stone, "From Minister Hellyer," 12.

as CDS, by standing-up the new headquarters in early 2006, and by personally pushing these new organizations to deliver on his vision, Hillier forced the CF to work quickly.¹⁰⁶ Adherence to the principle of leveraging *internal and external change agents* was not as clear. Hillier ensured that he had support from the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence from the onset but as indicated above, Hillier did not maintain the support of the Environmental Chiefs of Staff throughout the process.¹⁰⁷ The establishment of CDS Action Teams and the CF Transformation Team are all in-line with the principle of change agents but without stamping out or co-opting senior leaders opposed to the transformation there is the risk that the gains will not be permanent. This factor, coupled with high operational tempo for the past three years, may explain why there have been very few tangible changes enacted since the establishment of the new headquarters in 2006.¹⁰⁸

Irreversible traction is another area of the current CF Transformation that does not fully meet the principles of a successful organizational transformation. Specifically, while the establishment of the new headquarters in a purposely-selected building separate from NDHQ represents a certain element of *irreversible traction*, that action is not as solid as the passing of federal legislation. As the minister made the decision to create these new organizations, the next minister can easily undo it.¹⁰⁹ However, the longer these headquarters continue to exist, the more useful they will become and therefore, the more inertia they have to thwart any discussion of their removal. The final principle to consider is that of *organizational culture and coherence*. The degree to which CF Transformation is following this principle is not as clear as the first four. Over the past forty years, the CF has become more bureaucratic at its upper echelons and the air land and sea environments have become almost as powerful as the services were before

¹⁰⁶ Jeffrey, *Inside Canadian Forces*, 61.

¹⁰⁷ Hillier, *A Soldier First*, 2.

¹⁰⁸ Gosselin and Stone, “From Minister Hellyer,” 13.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 11.

unification with respect to controlling their own funding, procurement and employment. If those two ideas are now intrinsic to current CF culture, then transformation is not protecting them in the least. General Hillier's first principle within his vision promulgated in September 2005 is that there needs to be the creation of a CF identity that is stronger and larger than any single element or corps.¹¹⁰ In the same document, Hillier stresses the importance of an operational focus for the CF as a whole. These two concepts or cornerstones to his vision focus on protecting CF culture and coherence although they will require the transformation of some of the current foci in NDHQ.

The evaluation of the success of CF Transformation will depend heavily on one's own point of view and the passage of time. From the narrow focus of establishing operationally-focused headquarters that allowed the CF to deal with complex operations in Afghanistan while also preparing to meet the domestic security needs of the winter Olympic Games, it has been a success.¹¹¹ The use of the five principles of a successful organizational transformation proved insightful as a lens through which to examine the current CF Transformation. While the current leadership of the CF is not strictly following these principles, they are following enough of them to ensure that they are on the right track to date. Further success for CF Transformation will depend on the adherence to these principles.

Conclusion

It is not easy to execute an organizational transformation successfully. Within a military context, the chances of success are even more remote. As demonstrated by the historical examples in this paper, the determination of success can be even more difficult depending on the time after the transformation that one is trying to measure that success. There is no doubt that the attempt at unification of the U.S. armed forces in the 1940s did not result in unification but it did

¹¹⁰ In the CF, an element is similar to a service in the U.S. Armed Forces. In addition, the corps are loose trade affiliated groupings such as infantry, armoured, artillery, engineers, logistics etc. See Jeffery, *Inside Canadian Forces*, 121.

¹¹¹ Senate, *Proceedings*, 70.

result in the creation of the National Security Council. This council did satisfy some of the impetus of the original unification and so, in a very narrow sense, can be said to have been a success. Similarly, the Australian and Canadian examples resulted in different degrees of a unified military structure but are still critiqued to this day as to whether or not they were effective. The difficulty measuring success can be carried forward to the current CF attempts to transform itself into a more operationally-focused structure.

Future success of CF Transformation will require the replacement of General Hillier's role in providing the *strategic leader and vision* as well as a source of a *sense of urgency*. Without satisfying these two important principles, the existing organizational inertia will eventually counter the success made to date. That inertia may come from the disenfranchised Environmental Chiefs of Staff or from the overly bureaucratic nature of NDHQ. Regardless, as the principle of *irreversible traction* was not followed as effectively as it could have been that inertia may still win out. However, by following the five principles of a successful organization transformation, derived from business and organizational theory, the chances of success for that transformation will be significantly increased.

Success for an organizational transformation will be far more likely if it is led by a *strategic leader with vision*, if that leader establishes a *sense of urgency* to accomplish the transformation, if that leader leverages *internal and external change agents* to accomplish the vision, if that leader creates *irreversible traction*, and if the entire transformation vision respects the *organizational culture* and protects the organization's *coherence*. As has been demonstrated by applying these principles to examples of military transformations in recent history, not following these principles will not doom that transformation but will make it significantly more difficult to succeed. Beyond the five principles above, one other issue must be remembered when considering transforming a nation's military. The reason they are difficult to change to any large degree is that militaries have the mantle and responsibility to be the final option when a nation is threatened; there is no possibility for error in this endeavor. As such, the senior military leaders,

professionals in their own right, have little patience for new ideas that have not been proven in battle. Transforming a nation's military without awareness of the impact on its ability to protect the nation should never be attempted, to do so will risk the very existence of the nation.

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